

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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GIAQUINTA BILL ON MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES PASSED BY HOUSE

INDIANAPOLIS -- House Bill 1270, legislation coauthored by State Rep. Ben GiaQuinta (D-Fort Wayne), that creates criminal offenses for unlawfully entering, possessing, or operating a motor vehicle, passed out of the House today. The bill also provides for enhanced penalties for this crime.

The punishment for unlawfully entering a vehicle is a Class A misdemeanor if the vehicle has visible steering column damage or ignition switch alteration. The charges are elevated to a Class D felony if the motor vehicle is used in the commission of a crime.

Certain people are excluded from the penalties included in this bill. These include public safety officers, state police motor carrier inspectors and employee of a collections agency. Also, if the motor vehicle must be moved because it is abandoned, inoperable, or improperly parked, the person who moves that car will not be punishable.

"This bill is extremely necessary," said GiaQuinta. "Last year in Fort Wayne, 120 people were caught in or driving someone else's car, a car that they had essentially stolen. But they were not arrested and got away with only a disciplinary action, since the current laws regarding this are so inadequate."

House Bill 1270 now moves to the full Senate for further consideration.